

Raising Argumentative Kids

I'm sure most of us remember the 'why' years. Many will still be navigating their way through the endless questions asked by toddlers. Children are naturally inquisitive and the inquiry approach used in many schools today aims to make the most of this natural thirst for knowledge and understanding. We want children to ask questions – lots of them! Modern day access to instant answers means many of us are falling behind in our ability to ask the right questions.

I recently read an article by Peter Ellerton from the University of Qld who gave 5 suggestions for raising argumentative kids:

1. **Be wrong**: One of the strongest characteristics of good thinkers is their willingness to change their minds based on finding new evidence or better arguments. Embrace when you are wrong, explain why you might have come to the wrong conclusion and celebrate the fact that you are in a better position than before.
2. **Value inquiry above knowledge**: Being able to change position is a valuable skill. Be known for your ability to inquire and adapt to circumstances, not just for the scope of your knowledge.
3. **Embrace uncertainty**: The core of resilience is comfort with uncertainty. Admit to children when you don't know something or when you might need to look to others for answers or guidance. Doing so does not show a lack of confidence. It shows that you know the path from uncertainty to belief.
4. **Show empathy**: Empathy is not only about understanding how others feel, it is also about understanding how others think. Learning to think effectively is more a social competence than an individual one so children need to move from an egocentric worldview to one in which understanding the positions and ideas of others is important in helping to expand their own ability to think effectively.
5. **Be tough**: insist on your children doing the intellectual hard yards themselves. You do not have to provide all the answers, encourage children to find out for themselves, using the skills and attitudes you have modelled for them.

Challenge your children, keep asking them 'why' and encourage them to keep asking too! The full article can be read at <https://theconversation.com/some-useful-tips-on-how-to-raise-an-argumentative-child-43420>

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